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CIA BLAMED IN 'PHOTO GAP' ON MISSILES

Pentagon Reveals Shift Of Cuba Surveillance To Air Force

[Washington Bureau of The Sun]

Washington, Feb. 27—The Central Intelligence Agency was criticized by Representative Rogers (D., Fla.) today as a result of Pentagon disclosures that the surveillance mission over Cuba was transferred from the CIA to the Air Force just before the United States obtained photographic evidence of the Soviet missile build-up last October.

"The implication clearly exists," Rogers said, "that CIA may have been the stopgap which accounted for the time lag in which the Russians almost completed their missile installations in Cuba."

He was referring to the "photo gap"—the period between early September and mid-October for which no photographs of Cuba have been released by the Government.

October Photographs Key

President Kennedy forced a showdown with Russia after he was given photographs taken by the Air Force October 14.

According to the Defense Department, this was one or two days after the surveillance mission was transferred from the CIA to the Strategic Air Command.

Senator Stennis (D., Miss.), chairman of the Armed Services Preparedness subcommittee, explained tonight that the mission was given to the Air Force in a "very natural way" because the Air Force had "more facilities and more pilots."

So far as he knew and believed, the Senator reported, there was "no dispute" and the "fullest and most complete cooperation" between the Air Force and the CIA during the emergency.

Senator Stennis spoke [illegible] after hearing three days of testimony from Maj. Gen. John A. Breitweiser, Air Force intelligence chief. The heads of Navy and Army intelligence will appear tomorrow before the preparedness subcommittee.

When Stennis was asked if it was true that there was a "photo gap" in the intelligence operation over Cuba, he replied that "I don't think there was a gap when no photos were taken."

Pressed on this issue, he added a short time later that there never was a "complete gap" and emphasized that surveillance work went on during the transfer from the CIA to the Air Force.

The Senator described Breitweiser as a "free, full and frank witness" before the subcommittee, which interrogated John A. McCone, CIA director, earlier this month.

He said the General made it clear that it is "highly important and very difficult" to evaluate fragments of information that come in.

"It is not just a matter of 'getting' the information but of putting it together," Stennis noted.

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